

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

The Examiner is thanked for the clarity and conciseness of the Office Action and for the citation of the references which have been studied with interest and care.

Claim Rejections - 35 U.S.C. §§ 102 and 103

Claim 38 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Hiroshi (JP 07-281293). Amended claim 38 is allowable for the same reasons that claims 8 and 33 are allowable.

Claims 1-2 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as being anticipated by Nishimae et al. (US 6,724,546). Claims 1, 3-5 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as being anticipated by De Vaan et al. (US 6,773,116). Claims 1, 6-7, 20-22, 26, 31-32 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Miyata et al. (2002/0036833) in view of Hiroshi (JP 07-281293).

Claims 1, 20 and 21 have been canceled. For the reasons discussed below, the remaining claims are allowable.

Allowable Subject Matter

Claims 8-19, 23-25, 27-30, 33-37 were objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would have been allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

Claims 8, 9, 15, 19, 23, 27, 28, 29, 30 and 33 have been rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of their respective base claims and any intervening claims. Claims 2, 3, 6 and 7 have been amended to depend from claim 8. Claims 22, 26, 31 and 32 have been amended to depend from claim 33. Claims 34-37, as originally submitted, were already in independent form. Accordingly, withdrawal of this objection and the above rejections is respectfully requested.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

For the reasons discussed above, it is respectfully submitted that none of Applicants' claims are anticipated by any cited reference, nor would any of the claims have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art over the collective teachings of the cited references. Withdrawal of these rejections is respectfully requested.

Applicants submit that the application is in condition for allowance. Concurrence by the Examiner and early passage of the application to issue are respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Peter L. Holmes', written over a horizontal line.

Peter L. Holmes
Reg. No. 37,353
Attorney for Applicants

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HENRICKS, SLAVIN & HOLMES LLP
840 Apollo Street, Suite 200
El Segundo, California 90245-4737
Telephone: (310) 563-1454
Facsimile: (310) 563-1460